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COMMUNITY



Youth and community leaders gather for a group photo at the Stop the Violence Youth Seminar, underscoring the event’s call for stronger community involvement in guiding and supporting young people.

‘It Takes a Village’: Houston Seminar Urges Unified Action Against Youth Violence

By: Forward Times Staff

Community leaders, law enforcement officials, and youth advocates delivered a united message of responsibility, emotional awareness, and collective care at the “Stop the Violence Youth Seminar” held in Houston’s Third Ward. The gathering brought together families, mentors, and local officials in a shared effort to confront one of the city’s most urgent crises.

According to a youth violence profile published by the Houston Health Department, homicide remains one of the leading causes of death for young people in the city — with rates **more than nine times higher for Black males ages 15 to 24** than their White peers. The seminar pushed beyond the statistics, offering tools, testimony, and community-led solutions rooted in healing rather than fear.

Investigator Lance Watkins of the Baytown Police Department opened the program by addressing the emotional realities behind youth conflict. “We can’t stop violence. What we can do is reduce it,” he said. Watkins emphasized that emotional awareness is one of the strongest tools in preventing harm. “If you don’t understand your emotions, other people can control you,” he added, urging adults to stay engaged and create opportunities for youth. “Our young people can be whatever they want to become. They just need the opportunity.”

Comedian and mentor **Leroy ThaThird** followed with a candid account of his experience being incarcerated as a teenager. He challenged the audience to reject narratives that equate aggression with toughness. “Violence is not strength. Real strength is walking away,” he said. “The biggest punchline in life is redemption.” His message resonated with the crowd as a reminder that transformation is possible — especially when young people are surrounded by consistent support.

Serving as event MC, Youth Violence & Conflict

Resolution instructor **Karataza Israel** reminded attendees that sustainable change requires collective responsibility. “It takes a village to raise a child,” he said. “It’s the neighbors, the teachers, the officers — everyone who takes a point to raise that child.” Israel encouraged families to rebuild the networks that once anchored their communities: “Gathering ourselves together, getting to know one another, learning from one another, teaching and training one another, and then also training our children.”

Instructor **Irama Israel** closed the event by centering the role of parents and caregivers. “Your children are watching your actions. They learn through your behavior,” he said. “If we want our children to be fixed, we must fix ourselves as parents.” His words reinforced the seminar’s overarching theme: meaningful change begins with modeling the emotional intelligence, patience, and accountability expected of young people.

Hosted by the **Youth Violence and Conflict Resolution organization**, the seminar reflects the group’s mission to empower and inspire youth to create positive change in their communities through mentorship and conflict resolution training.

For more information, visit youthviolencecr.org or email info@youthviolencecr.org.

CLASSIFIEDS

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Academy of Accelerated Learning, Inc. is soliciting Statements of Qualifications from firms providing Real Estate and Broker Services. A Request for Qualifications (RFQ) has been issued and is available to interested firms.

Completed submissions are due December 9, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. For full RFQ details and contact information, please visit www.aalinc.org.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Request for Proposal – Houston-Galveston Area Council – Enterprise Solutions – Airport Operations Equipment, Services, and Materials – AO04-26

H-GAC is soliciting responses for the selection of qualified manufacturers, distributors, installers and service providers of Airport Operations Equipment, Services, and Materials and to make these types of products and services available to Customers of the HGACBuy Cooperative Purchasing Program under blanket type contracts.

To view the solicitation documents, visit <https://www.hgacbuy.org/bid-notices> or [ESBD \(txsmartbuy.com\)](mailto:ESBD@txsmartbuy.com).

Response Deadline: January 15, 2026 @ 12:00 P.M. CT

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

Request for Qualifications to Provide Construction Management and Construction Engineering and Inspection Services for Various Projects for OST / Alameda Corridors Redevelopment Authority - COH TIRZ 7

SCOPE

OST / Alameda Corridors Redevelopment Authority TIRZ 7 (Authority) is seeking qualifications from professional engineering firms for Construction Management (CM) and Construction Engineering and Inspection services (CEI) for various projects for the Authority. The projects will include CM and CEI services for roads, sidewalks, drainage, water, wastewater, mobility, parks, traffic and facility infrastructure improvement projects.

The RFQ can be obtained online from www.civcastusa.com; search OST/Alameda Corridors Redevelopment Authority TIRZ #7. Firms must register on the CivCast website to view and/or download specifications and plans for this project. There is NO charge to view or download documents.

RFQ SCHEDULE	
RFQ Publication Date on CivCast	November 21, 2025
Pre-Proposal Conference Date & Time	December 2, 2025, at 2:00PM CST
Last Date to Submit Questions	December 5, 2025, before 5:00 PM CST
Responses posted to Civcast	December 9, 2025
SOQ Submittal Due Date	December 12, 2025, before 5:00 PM CST

PRE-SUBMITTAL CONFERENCE

There will be a non-mandatory pre-submittal conference on December 2, 2025, at 2:00 PM CST. The meeting will be held on Teams. Instructions will be posted on CivCast prior to the meeting.

It is the responsibility of each vendor to examine the entire RFQ package, seek clarification in writing, and review their submittal for accuracy before submitting. Questions relating to this RFQ must be submitted in writing to HHolliday@OSTAlameda.com with a copy to: Projects@OSTAlameda.com. All questions submitted in writing prior to the deadline will be compiled and answered in writing. The Authority will not be bound by any information conveyed verbally.

Mr. Hexser Holliday
Director of Capital Projects Planning and Development
OST/Alameda Corridors Redevelopment Authority TIRZ #7
HHolliday@OSTAlameda.com
Projects@OSTAlameda.com

STAR ACADEMYCOMMUNITY TOUR

FEATURING BUDDIEROE

09 DEC COOL DADS HQ, 5TH WARD

12 DEC BLOOM ACADEMY (SCHOOL ONLY)

16 DEC BETHEL CHRISTIAN ACADEMY (SCHOOL ONLY)

19 DEC WORKSHOP HOUSTON, 3RD WARD

08 JAN KINDRED STORIES (CLASSROOM CONCERT)

12 JAN HARVARD UNIVERSITY

18 FEB TABSE STATE CONFERENCE

06 MAR MISSOURI CITY (CITY HALL)

EVERYONE

Lost & Found

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AFTER SCHOOL

STAR ACADEMY